United Nations

Centre against Apartheid

Notes and Documents

No. 15/91 June 1991

ABUJA DECLARATION ON SOUTH AFRICA

Adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its twenty-seventh ordinary session held at Abuja, Nigeria, from 3 to 5 June 1991

All material in these Notes and Documents may be freely reprinted
Acknowledgement, together with a copy of the publication containing the reprint, would be appreciated
United Nations, New York 10017

91-20707

ABUJA DECLARATION ON SOUTH AFRICA

1. From its foundation, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), acting in support of the people of South Africa, led by their national liberation movements, has been engaged in the struggle to end apartheid - a crime against humanity.

2. As long as apartheid persists, it continues to be a grave affront to all peoples, in particular those of Africa and the black diaspora, who have been victims of slavery, colonialism and racialism.

3. It has taken the lives of many people, both in South Africa and other countries of southern Africa, destroyed means of livelihood for millions, dehumanized and degraded entire peoples.

4. Because of all this and more, it has posed a challenge to all people of conscience to act in a manner consistent with love of freedom and understanding of the importance of the principle that all persons are born equal.

5. As we meet at Abuja, Nigeria, we are inspired with renewed confidence that, as a result of the struggles that have been waged by the people of South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world, the scourge of apartheid will soon be a thing of the past.

6. This outcome, for which millions of people on our continent and the rest of the world have striven, will make a decisive contribution to the universal effort to end racial oppression and prejudice, wherever they may occur, and to assert the dignity of every human being, regardless of colour, race or gender.

7. Coming at this time in the history of Africa, the liquidation of the system of apartheid will be an important signal of the commitment of our continent to its renewal as a zone of freedom, respect for human and people's rights, justice, prosperity, peace and stability.

8. As part of that commitment, we reiterate our long-held preference for the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country by peaceful means.

9. We reaffirm our conviction that implementation of the provisions contained in the Harare Declaration of 21 August 1989 and the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the the United Nations General Assembly at its sixteenth special session on 14 December 1989, would lead to such a peaceful resolution of the South African question.

10. The people of South Africa have an urgent need to live together in conditions of justice, peace, prosperity and friendship among themselves. We believe that to achieve this, the steps visualized in these declarations should be carried out expeditiously.

11. The very success of the future process of reconstruction requires that South Africa proceed as quickly as possible to transform itself into a non-racial democracy.

12. This is also imperative for the future of all the countries in the region of southern Africa to enable them to cooperate among themselves as equals for the upliftment of all their peoples.

13. We are also convinced that a liberated South Africa will make an important contribution to the critical efforts of the peoples of Africa to create a political and social order that will guarantee all the peoples of our continent human rights, peace, security, stability and development.

14. For all these reasons, it is vital that we, the peoples of Africa, continue to wage a united struggle against apartheid and to persist in our support for the South African liberation movements until the abhorrent system of racist, white minority domination is totally abolished.

15. Accordingly, we reaffirm our support for the constitutional principles contained in the Harare and United Nations declarations, which provide the basis for the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial democracy and which once implemented, would make for an internationally acceptable solution of the South Africa question.

16. We urge the people of South Africa and all their political parties and organizations to accept these principles, to abandon all notions of racial and ethnic fragmentation of the population, so as to establish the conditions for speedy movement forward, towards the adoption of a democratic constitution.

17. To create the climate conducive to negotiations, we call upon the South African Government to implement all the preconditions stipulated in the Harare and United Nations consensus declarations on South Africa and the agreements it has entered into under the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes and to desist from any further resort to delaying tactics.

18. We are also gravely concerned at the current organized and orchestrated violence that has already claimed the lives of too many Black people. This violence has itself emerged as a major obstacle to the process of negotiations.

19. We demand that the South African Government act immediately to end this violence and enter into firm public commitments to do everything in its power to protect the lives and property of all the people of South Africa.

20. We also urge all political and other public organizations to stop fratricidal conflict that could delay the process towards the elimination of apartheid; and to agree to and abide by a code of conduct aimed at ending all violence among their members and supporters.

21. We wish to impress on the South African liberation movements the strategic importance of the unity of all anti-apartheid forces in the continuing struggle to liberate their country. We commend the decisions and steps that have been taken in this regard and urge them to pursue this objective with all necessary vigour. On our part, we stand ready to assist the democratic forces of South Africa to achieve this unity.

22. We acknowledge that there have been some positive developments in South Africa. Accordingly, we encourage the South African Government to pursue its efforts and to take further measures to accelerate the process for the elimination of apartheid. However, the preconditions set out in the Harare and United Nations consensus declarations and the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes have not been fully met. In these circumstances all sanctions must remain in place. We further reaffirm the decisive importance of sanctions in moving South Africa forward towards a non-racial democracy and are convinced that it will be necessary to continue to use this form of pressure until the system of apartheid has been ended.

23. Bearing in mind the positive developments made so far inside South Africa and the general international reaction thereto, we mandate the current Chairman of OAU, in consultation with the front-line States and the national liberation movements, and, within the framework of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government on Southern Africa, to continue to monitor and review the situation in South Africa, taking into account concrete steps undertaken by South Africa to remove all obstacles to genuine negotiations as stipulated in the Harare and the United Nations consensus declarations, as well as putting an immediate end to the ongoing violence.

24. Should the South African Government adopt measures that lead to positive, profound and irreversible changes towards the abolition of apartheid, we commit ourselves to review the question of sanctions with a view to readmitting South Africa into the international community.

25. We reiterate our support for the South African liberation movements and other democratic forces that have been in the forefront of the struggle to abolish the system of apartheid.

26. Accordingly, we commit ourselves to continue to provide these fighters against apartheid for a democratic South Africa with the necessary financial and material assistance to enable them to carry out their historic mission of liberating their country.

27. Let all the peoples of the world reaffirm their resolve to act in concert to assist the people of South Africa to regain their liberty without further delay. Let all our actions be guided by this noble objective, knowing that our own freedom will remain circumscribed as long as the people of South Africa are not free, and, knowing that our own actions can make a decisive contribution to the speed with which the final liquidation of the system of white minority rule on our continent is achieved. Let all of us walk the last mile together and, together, arrive at the common destination of the liquidation of the system of apartheid as well as the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial democracy.

READEX FICHE

Courtesy of the Centre against Apartheid